

CLAIM AMENDMENTS

1. (Cancelled).

2. (Currently Amended) The medical probe of claim 1 ~~4~~, wherein the operative element comprises a tissue ablation element.

3. (Currently Amended) The medical probe of claim 1 ~~4~~, wherein the operative element comprises a tissue sensing element.

4. (Currently Amended) ~~The medical probe of claim 1~~ A medical probe for use with tissue, comprising:

an elongate member having a proximal end and a distal end;

an operative element carried at the distal end of the elongate member, wherein the operative element comprises an expandable-collapsible body; and

a stabilizing shroud circumscribing at least a portion of the operative element, the shroud configured for applying a vacuum force to secure the operative element relative to the tissue.

5-8. (Cancelled)

9. (Currently Amended) The medical probe of claim 1 ~~4~~, wherein the shroud is secured to the distal end of the elongate member.

10. (Currently Amended) ~~The medical probe of claim 1, wherein the shroud comprises A~~ medical probe for use with tissue, comprising:

an elongate member having a proximal end and a distal end;

an operative element carried at the distal end of the elongate member; and

a stabilizing shroud circumscribing at least a portion of the operative element, the shroud comprising a wall and one or more vacuum ports located on the wall for applying a vacuum force to secure the operative element relative to the tissue.

11. (Currently Amended) The medical probe of claim 4, wherein the shroud circumscribes an entirety of the operative element.

12. (Currently Amended) The medical probe of claim 4, wherein the shroud is composed of a material exhibiting a low electrical conductivity.

13. (Currently Amended) ~~The medical probe of claim 1~~ A medical probe for use with tissue, comprising:

an elongate member having a proximal end and a distal end;

an operative element carried at the distal end of the elongate member; and

a stabilizing shroud circumscribing at least a portion of the operative element, the shroud configured for applying a vacuum force to secure the operative element relative to the tissue,
wherein the shroud is pre-shaped to expand in the absence of a compressive force.

14-16. (Cancelled)

17. (Currently Amended) The medical probe of claim 11, ~~wherein the operative element comprises an expandable-collapsible body, and~~ 4, wherein the shroud has a first configuration when the expandable-collapsible body is inflated, and a second configuration when the expandable-collapsible body is deflated.

18-22. (Cancelled)

23. (Previously Amended) A medical probe for use with tissue, comprising:

an elongate member having a proximal end and a distal end;
an operative element carried at the distal end of the elongate member;
a sheath having a lumen through which the elongate member is slidably disposed;
a stabilizer associated with sheath, wherein the stabilizer is configured for applying a vacuum force to secure the operative element relative to the tissue.

24. (Original) The medical probe of claim 23, wherein the stabilizer is secured to the sheath.

25-26. (Cancelled)

27. (Currently Amended) The method of claim ~~25~~ 30, wherein the operating comprises delivering ablation energy to the operative element to ablate the target tissue site.

28. (Currently Amended) The method of claim ~~25~~ 30, wherein the operating comprises sensing a signal at the target tissue site with the operative element.

29. (Currently Amended) The method of claim ~~25~~ 30, wherein the target tissue is cardiac tissue.

30. (Currently Amended) ~~The method of claim 29, wherein the cardiac tissue is~~ A method of performing a medical procedure on a patient using a medical probe having an operative element and a shroud circumscribing at least a portion of the operative element, comprising:

introducing the medical probe within the patient to place the operative element adjacent a target epicardial tissue site;

applying a vacuum force to the shroud to secure the operative element relative to the target tissue site; and

operating the operative element to perform the medical procedure on the target tissue site
while the operative element is secured relative to the target tissue site.

31. (Cancelled)

32. (Currently Amended) ~~The medical probe of claim 1,~~ wherein the shroud is A medical
probe for use with tissue, comprising:

an elongate member having a proximal end and a distal end;

an operative element carried at the distal end of the elongate member; and

a conically-shaped stabilizing shroud circumscribing at least a portion of the operative
element, the shroud configured for applying a vacuum force to secure the operative element relative
to the tissue.

33. (Cancelled)

34. (Currently Amended) ~~The medical probe of claim 1~~ A medical probe for use with tissue,
comprising:

an elongate member having a proximal end and a distal end;

an operative element carried at the distal end of the elongate member; and

a stabilizing shroud circumscribing at least a portion of the operative element, the shroud
configured for applying a vacuum force to secure the operative element relative to the tissue,
wherein the shroud is not secured to an exterior of the operative element.

35. (Currently Amended) ~~The medical probe of claim 1~~ A medical probe for use with tissue,
comprising:

an elongate member having a proximal end and a distal end;

an operative element carried at the distal end of the elongate member; and
a stabilizing shroud circumscribing at least a portion of the operative element, the shroud
configured for applying a vacuum force to secure the operative element relative to the tissue,
wherein the shroud is configured to assume a collapsed configuration in the presence of an external
compressive force.

36. (Cancelled).

37. (Previously Added) The medical probe of claim 10, wherein the one or more vacuum
ports are located on a distal edge of the wall.

38. (Previously Added) The medical probe of claim 10, wherein the one or more vacuum
ports comprise a plurality of vacuum ports.

39. (Previously Added) The medical probe of claim 10, wherein the shroud further has one or
more lumens extending along the wall in fluid communication with the one or more vacuum ports.

40. (Previously Added) The medical probe of claim 39, wherein the wall has one or more
enlarged planar regions carrying the one or more lumens and one or more thinner planar regions
between the one or more enlarged planar regions.

41. (Currently Amended) The ~~method~~ medical probe of claim 23, wherein the stabilizer
comprises a shroud circumscribing at least a portion of the operative element.

42. (Currently Amended) ~~The method of claim 25, further comprising~~ A method of
performing a medical procedure on a patient using a medical probe having an operative element and
a shroud circumscribing at least a portion of the operative element, comprising:

introducing the medical probe within the patient to place the operative element adjacent a target tissue site;

applying a vacuum force to the shroud to secure the operative element relative to the target tissue site;

expanding the operative element prior to the operation of; and
operating the expanded operative element to perform the medical procedure on the target tissue site while the operative element is secured relative to the target tissue site.

43. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 25 ~~23~~, wherein the shroud has one or more vacuum ports, and wherein the vacuum force is applied to the one or more vacuum ports.

44. (Currently Amended) ~~The method of claim 43~~ A method of performing a medical procedure on a patient using a medical probe having an operative element and a shroud circumscribing at least a portion of the operative element, wherein the shroud has one or more vacuum ports are located on a distal edge of the shroud, the method further comprising:

introducing the medical probe within the patient to place the operative element adjacent a target tissue site;

placing the distal edge of the shroud into contact with the target tissue site while applying the a vacuum force to the shroud one or more vacuum ports to secure the operative element relative to the target tissue site; and

operating the operative element to perform the medical procedure on the target tissue site while the operative element is secured relative to the target tissue site.

45. (Currently Amended) ~~The method of claim 25, further comprising~~ A method of performing a medical procedure on a patient using a medical probe having an operative element and a shroud circumscribing at least a portion of the operative element, comprising:

introducing the medical probe within the patient to place the operative element adjacent a target tissue site;

expanding the shroud prior to;

applying the a vacuum force to the expanded shroud to secure the operative element relative to the target tissue site; and

operating the operative element to perform the medical procedure on the target tissue site while the operative element is secured relative to the target tissue site.

46. (Previously Added) The method of claim 45, wherein the shroud expansion comprises releasing an external compressive force from the shroud.

47. (Previously Added) The method of claim 45, wherein the shroud expansion comprises expanding the operative element.

48. (Newly Added) The medical probe of claim 10, wherein the shroud is secured to the distal end of the elongate member.

49. (Newly Added) The medical probe of claim 10, wherein the shroud circumscribes an entirety of the operative element.

50. (Newly Added) The medical probe of claim 10, wherein the shroud is composed of a material exhibiting a low electrical conductivity.

51. (Newly Added) The medical probe of claim 13, wherein the shroud is secured to the distal end of the elongate member.

52. (Newly Added) The medical probe of claim 13, wherein the shroud circumscribes an entirety of the operative element.

53. (Newly Added) The medical probe of claim 13, wherein the shroud is composed of a material exhibiting a low electrical conductivity.

54. (Newly Added) The medical probe of claim 32, wherein the shroud is secured to the distal end of the elongate member.

55. (Newly Added) The medical probe of claim 32, wherein the shroud circumscribes an entirety of the operative element.

56. (Newly Added) The medical probe of claim 32, wherein the shroud is composed of a material exhibiting a low electrical conductivity.

57. (Newly Added) The medical probe of claim 35, wherein the shroud is secured to the distal end of the elongate member.

58. (Newly Added) The medical probe of claim 35, wherein the shroud circumscribes an entirety of the operative element.

59. (Newly Added) The medical probe of claim 35, wherein the shroud is composed of a material exhibiting a low electrical conductivity.

60. (Newly Added) The method of claim 30, wherein the shroud has one or more vacuum ports, and wherein the vacuum force is applied to the one or more vacuum ports.

61. (Newly Added) The method of claim 42, wherein the shroud has one or more vacuum ports, and wherein the vacuum force is applied to the one or more vacuum ports.

62. (Newly Added) The method of claim 42, wherein the tissue target site is a cardiac tissue target site.

63. (Newly Added) The method of claim 44, wherein the tissue target site is a cardiac tissue target site.

64. (Newly Added) The method of claim 45, wherein the shroud has one or more vacuum ports, and wherein the vacuum force is applied to the one or more vacuum ports.

65. (Newly Added) The method of claim 45, wherein the tissue target site is a cardiac tissue target site.